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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/RPM AND EUR/SE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [EUN](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKS MAINTAIN THEIR CONCERNS OVER ESDP ARE
SERIOUS AND REAL

REF: A. ANKARA 1538 AND PREVIOUS B. BRUSSELS 1890 C.

BRUSSELS 1736

Classified By: USEU Pol-Mil Unit Chief Jeremy Brenner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: According to the Turkish Mission to the EU, Ankara's treatment and status within ESDP represents a serious problem, and their list of demands does not constitute a bargaining ploy related to other political issues. They stress the EU has committed itself to a number of initiatives, and Ankara wants only to see these decision implemented. Access to EDA and a Security Agreement with the EU are two of Ankara's main demands. They deem initial EU thinking about a package of gestures to Turkey to be insufficient. End summary.

¶2. (C) In a blunt conversation June 14 with Tolga Kaya, the officer responsible for ESDP at the Turkish Mission to the EU, we were told that Ankara views its concerns over Turkey's role in ESDP as serious and "very, very real." While Kaya acknowledged -- after considerable prodding -- that the specific issues related to ESDP can be viewed in the context of the overall Turkey-EU relationship, he sought to hammer at specific ESDP commitments undertaken by the EU and never fulfilled. The two items from the long list of "concerns and frustrations" that Ankara is most insistent upon are the conclusion of an EU-Turkey Security Agreement, and administrative arrangements that will allow Turkish participation in the European Defense Agency (EDA).

¶3. (C) Kaya denied that there has been any particular precipitating event to the ongoing display of Turkish displeasure with the EU. Rather, it is the culmination of a long series of failures on the part of the EU to live up to "existing commitments" that has produced an atmosphere of suspicion and frustration in Turkey. He ascribed this view to the civilians in MFA as well as to the military and the public at large.

¶4. (C) Kaya went into considerable detail concerning the background of negotiations over a Security Agreement, which figured prominently among the Turkish complaints. He said that such an agreement was first proposed by the EU a number of years ago, and Turkey finally agreed to accept a "standard" text despite a number of concerns. In January of this year, the EU concluded -- based upon a veto by Cyprus (and Greece) -- that it was no longer willing to enter into such an agreement with Turkey. According to Kaya, the Cypriot veto was explicitly made on political grounds, rather than

any technical issue related to the agreement itself. (Note: Predictably, the Greeks and Cypriots have a significantly different interpretation of events. See ref C for additional details. End note)

15. (C) Ankara insists that it has a "right" to establish administrative arrangements with the European Defense Agency, based on Turkey's pre-existing membership in the Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) under the Western European Union. Since ESDP is in most respects, the successor organization to the WEU, the rights and privileges enjoyed by Turkey under the previous umbrella should carry over to the new structures. Norway and Turkey -- as non-EU European members of NATO -- both applied for EDA access when the agency was established in 2005. Their applications were initially treated -- and blocked -- jointly, until early 2006 when the applications were separated and Norway was given the right to sit on the Consultative Committee of the EDA. Ankara has been furious ever since.

16. (C) Kaya stressed that Ankara has shown great flexibility and patience in NATO-EU fora by allowing several informal meetings of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) to take place with Cyprus and Malta present. Under the terms of agreements between NATO and the EU for strategic cooperation, only EU members which belong to the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and have a security agreement with NATO can participate. Neither Cyprus nor Malta qualifies, and are therefore excluded from meetings or information exchanges related to EU-NATO strategic cooperation. (Comment: Ankara has taken a very broad view of what constitutes "strategic cooperation" thereby narrowing the scope of contact between the two full organizations in any formal setting. End Comment)

17. (C) According to Kaya, Ankara -- at the "highest level" -- expects real solutions to their demands for a greater role in the decision-making process of ESDP. Turkey rejects any suggestion that there is a linkage between the political problems with Cyprus and the EU's failure to meet its obligations. Kaya made the point repeatedly that many of the things Turkey is demanding were proposed and approved by the EU but never put into practice. Kaya said that the limited internal administrative measures apparently under consideration as a gesture from the EU were unacceptable and will not resolve the issue. He said that Ankara had no problems concerning the EU's missions to Kosovo or Afghanistan, but Turkey would not permit the necessary NATO-EU agreements to proceed until their concerns related to ESDP have been addressed.

18. (C) Kaya insisted that the "political elements" of the Cyprus dispute and the commitments to Turkey by the EU were not comparable and could not be linked. The only concession he would make to a possible political process to address these concerns, was to recognize that a "positive atmosphere" would be more conducive to flexible interpretations of existing policies.

19. (C) Comment: We pointed out that Ankara has made its point loudly and clearly and that we support closer ties between Turkey and the EU. We also noted that we share a number of Ankara's practical concerns about exercising influence within EU structures as a third-party contributor to ESDP missions. We also made the point that neither NATO nor the US can be expected to fix this problem. At this stage, the "feel good package" of gestures the EU is reportedly preparing is probably DOA, since any real or meaningful change in Turkey's ESDP status would require European Council approval -- thereby being subject to Cypriot veto. Internal changes in procedure, such as additional Turkey-only consultations -- have already been rejected by Ankara as insufficient. Nevertheless, we don't see many signs here that Cyprus is feeling any heat for its stance. This is because EU member states tend to perceive that access to EU programs such as ESDP are questions for the member states to decide exclusively and not subject to any bargaining with

outsiders. Thus, a majority of member states see no contradiction between accepting at face value Cyprus's "right" to veto Turkish ESDP participation, while viewing as "blackmail" Turkey's pressure to force more access to ESDP and EDA. Our Cypriot contacts here in turn have given us a long list of perceived grievances and say they doubt that Turkey would reciprocate any "concessions" by Cyprus. None of our contacts have indicated that any major EU actor is actively engaged in seeking a solution.

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